



THE ATEITIS "HARVEST ROMANCE"

The above series of pictures are from the "smash-hit" folk performance of the season which portrayed in dance form harvest and wedding dances and customs, presented by ATEITIS, Chicago's Lithuanian folk dance group of Vyts Beliajus. Left to right; Sally Adintas and Frank Zapolis, bride and groom. John Vilimas, the Kvieslys, personal messenger of the groom who went about inviting guests to attend the wedding. The bride's maids performing "Sadutė", a dance of farewell to girlhood, after which the bride was led to her parents (seated, Lorraine Vilimas and Vince Samaska) and after kissing the crucifix (on the little table) she received their blessing and left for church. This scene evoked tears from the Lithuanian women in the audience. Girl facing camera is Eleanor Mellas who beautifully sang the traditional wedding songs. Last scene took place before the newly weds left the wedding. She bids adieu to her parents. The wreath of rue was then removed. At that part the groom and other men-folk "kibitzed" around in a corner, for the wreath removal is not to be seen by them. (Foto by Fin.)

LITHUANIAN SONGS AND FOLK DANCES AGAIN WARMLY RECEIVED AT INTERNATIONAL HOUSE CONCERT . . .

With summer slowly fading away, the Lithuanians of Chicago started out bright and early on what promises to be a very full musical season.

One of three major musical events of September was the fourth annual concert sponsored by the Lithuanian Committee to aid the Immigrants' Protective League. This took place on September 20th at the International House.

Mrs. Sofia Adomaitis of Gary and Mrs. Prudencija Bickienė of East Chicago were the soloists and Ateitis Dancers, under the direction of Vytautas Beliajus rendered a very charming program.

Mrs. Adomaitis, formerly of the Lithuanian Opera in Vilnius, not only has a fine, warm mezzo soprano voice, but uses it very intelligently. It was a pleasure to listen to her interpretation of "A Day in Spring" (Simkus). Her rendition of the "The Forest Sighs" a folk song harmonized by our own Peter Sarpalius, a well known Chicago composer, was especially well received. The latter will bear frequent repetition, both from the point of the attractive simplicity of the music and appealing sentiment of the words. For her aria Mrs. Adomaitis chose Delilah's aria from "Samson and Delilah." In this Mrs. Adomaitis seemed very much at ease, and was warmly applauded by the large audience.

Mrs. Prudencija Bickienė, one of the younger singers, who is continuing her voice study in Chicago, rendered "The Maiden's Garden," a folk song harmonized by Tallat-Kalpša, in good style and with clear diction. However Mikas Petrauskas ballad "Young Lithuania" (words by the eminent poet Maironis), which, if memory serves me right, was sung for the first time in Chicago, was greatly enjoyed and appreciated. Both the music and words have depth of feeling and Mrs. Bickienė interpreted this number beautifully. Hope this number, too, will appear frequently in our concert programs of the future. The "Jewel Song" from Faust was well suited to the resources of Mrs. Bickienė's clear ringing soprano voice.

However, judging from the reception of the two duets "A boat drifts along" (Simkus) and "Tis Evening" from Pique Dame" (by Tschakowsky), with which Sofia Adomaitis and Prudencija Bickienė closed their part of the program, it would seem advisable for these two singers to stress duets in their repertoire. Their voices blend beautifully, they seem to have the same musical understanding and interpretative ability and both are serious artists.

The accompaniment was in the able hands of Mr. Vladas Jakubėnas, an outstanding musician of many talents.

The Ateitis Lithuanian Dancers, under the direction of Mr. Vytautas Beliajus, completely captured the audience with their dances.

A group of sixteen young dancers, in colorful Lithuanian costumes, performed the "Harvest Romance in Lithuania." This consisted of five numbers in the first part, featuring John Williams and Dennis Shrupsha. Although these particular dances were not new to most of us, we found new enjoyment in them at this concert.

Time came for the "Kvieslys" John Williams, attired in his quaint costume, to come before the audience to invite all present to the traditional Lithuanian wedding ceremony to follow. And this was most interesting. From the first number featuring the lovely soprano voice of Eleanor Mellas singing "The Sun Rises in the East" followed by the "Dance of the Bridesmaids" and all through down to "Tis Time for Parting" with Eleanor Mellas again singing the very touching farewells of daughter and parents, the audience seemed charmed. And well they might have been, as the narrator of the story was our own inimitable first lady Mrs. Josephine Dauvardis, who depicted the story in a most interesting manner, such as only she is capable of doing.

"Mr. Beliajus has a most unusual talent and priceless treasure. His grouping was most interesting, as was the story on which he chose to build his dances" is what Eugene Stinson of the Chicago Daily News said after

Mr. Beliajus recital on January 9, 1939. Cecil Smith of the Chicago Tribune and Herman Devries of the then Chicago Evening American, also gave Mr. Beliajus most favorable reviews at that time. Though the years Mr. Beliajus has only grown and branched out in the field of creative and teaching the art of folk dancing. He deserves ever so much credit for the many years of untiring efforts, which he so willingly gives to this cultural cause. His efforts and work have always brought most thankful results. Truly an admirable artist, Mr. Beliajus.

At the conclusion of the program Mrs. Dauvardis invited all present to stay for tea and a visit. The long table was artistically decorated with beautiful lace cloths, the floral center piece was of the Lithuanian national colors — yellow, green and red, as were the tall candles on either side. The audience and program participants, together with the members of the committee, seemed like one family which had truly enjoyed an afternoon of interesting Lithuanian songs and folk dances.

— Nora Gugis

(P. S. Since writing the above the Ateitis dancers were given wonderful publicity in the Chicago Sunday Tribune, October 11th, with headline in large bold type and pictures of the dancers in costume, together with members of the committee which arranged the above concert. My congratulations to Ateitis and Mr. Beliajus. NMG.)

NOTE: Mrs. Nora Gugis is the "Grand Lady of Music" in the American Lithuanian circles among whom she was active for the past great number of years. Such highly complimentary words from her is most elating to the group.

ATEITIS REPEATS HARVEST ROMANCE

The "Harvest Romance" was so very much liked that the ATEITIS group received two other engagements for its representation. One took place on October 25 at the Lithuanian Auditorium for the "Piliecių" (Lithuanian Citizen's) Club and another will take place in January for Mrs. Sophie Barcus' annual program.

On October 11th ATEITIS danced for the Norwegian National League who celebrated the annual Leif Erikson Day, in honor of the pre-Columbian discoverer of America. They represented six numbers vigorously danced and received an equally vigorous applause from the audience. Choral singing, a short skit and speeches where the other renditions which took place at the Carl Schurz High School Auditorium.

ALGIRDAS BRAZIS and DAINAVA CONCERT

Chicago's Orchestra Hall was filled to capacity on Sept. 27th, filled with an audience consisting of 99% (if not more) of Lithuanians. No other artist received such a wholehearted support from all factions as did Algerd, Chicago's native young Lith who now, for the third year, is with New York's Metropolitan Opera, soloing in lead parts. His singing career started amid the Lithuanian choruses, mainly, "Pirmyn", and at Lithuanian affairs which eventually bought him engagements with the Chicago Opera for two years, San Carlo Opera, Theatre of The Air, etc. His personality is winning and his voice, of the dramatic baritone range, pleasant to the ear. Therefore, great numbers of Lithians came to show their support to a deserving young man.

Musically it was a pleasant afternoon. Nothing great, but pleasant indeed. Most of the fault lay in the selection of "arias". They were practically all of the "dy-

ing swan" quality and after hearing a number of them they all commenced to sound the same. The following titles will give you an idea: Dank Sei Dir, Herr (Thanks To Thee, Lord — Handel), Gebet (Prayer), Heimweh (Home Sickness), Morgen Stimmung (Morning Voices — all by Hugo Wolf), Thy Will Be Done (Manna Zucca), For A Dream's Sake (Kramer), etc. Fortunately, they were minute length songs for the most part. Since the audience was wholly Lithuanian and Al having a perfect Lithuanian diction, for their sake he should have sang Lithuanian compositions, who, any old time are musically more beautiful and nearer to the peoples' hearts than those foreign German, Italian, French and other arias. In fact, the audience applauded with greater vigor when ever he sang Lithuanian compositions those of Jakubėnas, Bainaitis, Šimutis, etc. Those were all his good numbers sung by "Mūsų Algirdukas — Our Dear Algerd" and they wanted more of the same. His best number of the operatic arias was "Promesse De Mon Avenir" from Le Roi De Lahore by Massenet (French).

To stress further my point an excellent demonstration was seen when the "Dainava" song ensemble appeared on the stage. The faces in the audience lit up. The solemnness created during the previous renditions disappeared. The stage took on a festive atmosphere as the beautifully costumed group took their place. When they finished their renditions, under the exact baton of their leader Stepas Sodeika, the applause was with meaning and prolonged. The coming out and bowing several times, helped none; Mr. Sodeika had to come out to do an encore. The group presented compositions by Žilevicius, Naujalis, Gruodis and some folk songs. The best number of the entire program was the finale: "Atsisveikinimas Su Tėvyne — Bidding Farewell To The Fatherland" by Stasys Šimkus. In it were solo parts for Al Brazis, G. Peškys and D. Stankaitis. It was a very moving finale. Aleksis Kuchunas did a splendid job accompanying Algerd on the piano. We wish Algerd great success and the achievement of even greater honors.

Zerėnis

UNITED NORDIC 21st CONVENTION

During Sept. 26-27, United Nordic Folk Dancers held their 21st conclave in Chicago. The meet was preceded with a dance and exhibitions at the Verdandi Hall. Dance exhibitions were presented by the Chicago Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish groups and the Scandinavian group from Minneapolis.

Norsk children, under the direction of Harald Thorsen, opened the program doing the Gamla Reinlander, Reinlander For Three and the Tre Karls Polska, all adult dances which the children performed like adults with all flirting and playfulness which the last two numbers require. Their dancing was hampered by the broken down records, but the youngsters fought through the difficulties bravely and earned a warm response.

The Finns presented two numbers, Nuuska Polkka (Snuff Polka) which contained comic figures resulting from the first whiff of snuff and the very realistic sneezing, nose blowing and what have you. Snuff intake was once an elegant social "must" and this dance, no doubt, resulted with intention of ridiculing what would actually be considered ridiculous and unrefined under present idea of social correctness. Their Rihmarulla (Spool of Thread), which has some remote resemblances to the Swedish Weave of Vadmal, was their second offering, likewise well performed. Mrs. William Stream is their instructress.

The Scandinavians from Minnesota, composed of